

# Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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ED SINCE 1877

MBER 21, 2002

VOL. 126

No. 46

41

## Columbus church takes tornado strike

By Tony Martin  
Associate Editor

In the space of just a few minutes, members of East End Church in Columbus went from worship to terror and back to praise on Sunday night, November 10, as a tornado tore into their church.

The tornado sucked one wall of the sanctuary completely out, leaving the other three walls and the roof fairly intact. The steeple was stripped of its outer shell, leaving a skeletal framework behind.

One education building had virtually every window broken out, while the building directly behind the sanctuary suffered less damage. No one in the main building was seriously injured.

Sandra Cockrell, financial secretary for the church, said her daughter-in-law and granddaughter were across the street in the activities building.

"When they realized the tornado was about to hit, the adults moved all the kids into the kitchen area," she said.

When the tornado actually hit, the exterior walls of the building exploded outward, leaving only three walls of

the kitchen and part of the roof. Miraculously, there were only minor injuries.

People from the neighborhood began arriving at the church. Many had lost their homes. The Red Cross set up a response unit at Lee Middle School, but "in the meantime, we just tried to offer some towels and such to those people who came by so they could at least dry off," Walker said.

According to Gary Walker, minister of music at East End Church, the weather had been threatening all afternoon. Services went ahead as planned, with worship beginning at 6:30 p.m.

At the same time, a group of approximately 30 children and adults were in another meeting in the church's activities building, a renovated grocery store.

At about 7 p.m., a security guard for the church came in with news that a tornado was spotted on the ground in Artesia (a community near Columbus) and was headed their way. Interim Pastor Charlie Whitney dismissed services soon afterwards.

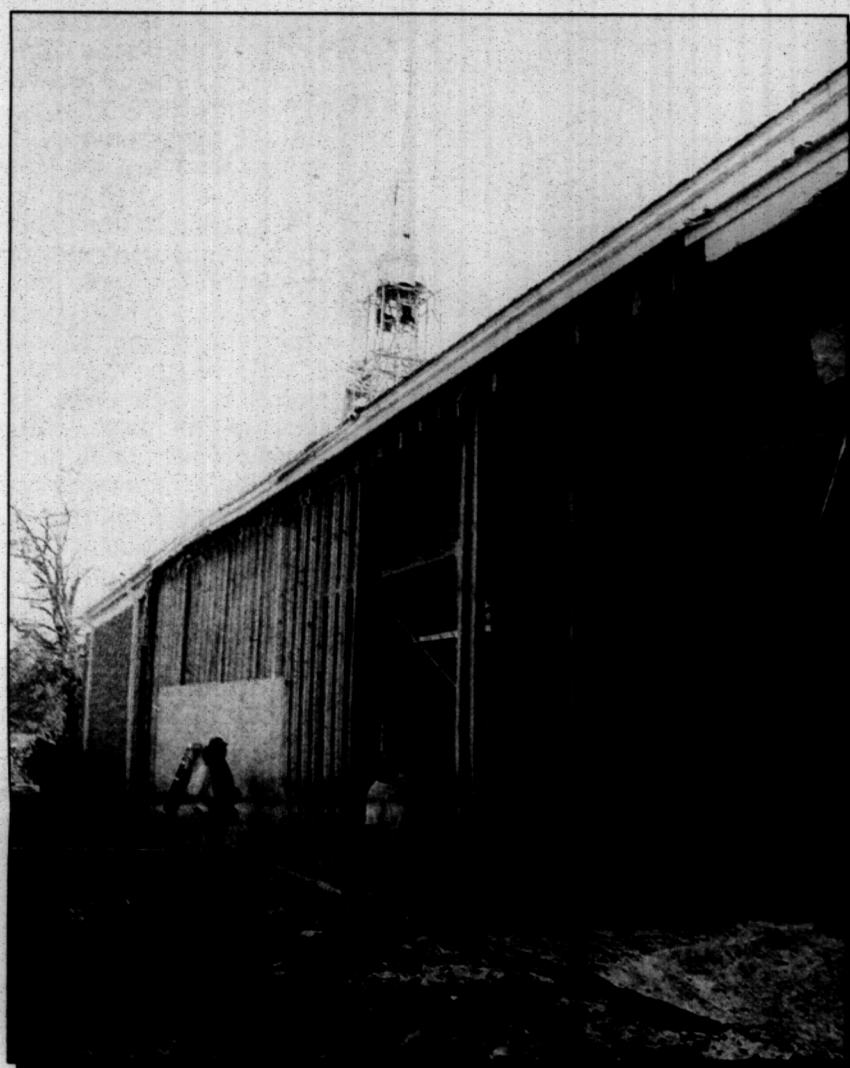
Several parents went across the street to check on their children. Other church members headed for their homes. At 7:20 p.m., a church member who had been standing at the door of the sanctuary said, "It's coming. Take cover!"

Walker said the 50-60 church members remaining took shelter in the interior halls running perpendicular to and behind the sanctuary.

"We didn't hear any crashing," said Walker, "just wind and a loud whump. Before we knew it, it was all over," he said.



ALL THAT REMAINS — The tornado that struck East End Church, Columbus, on November 10 demolished the church's activities building, leaving only the bare remains of the kitchen area shown here. Approximately 30 children and adults were spared serious injury as they huddled in this tiny space. (BR photo by Tony Martin)



DAMAGE REPAIR — Workers at East End Church, Columbus, replace a missing wall from the sanctuary with a temporary wall to keep out the elements until permanent repairs can be made. The skeletal remains of the steeple can be seen in the background. (BR photo by Tony Martin)

The Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Unit arrived and set up the mass feeding unit on a parking lot across the street from

First Church, Columbus. The Mississippi Baptist Men's Ministry Department began contacting volunteers, and soon help arrived from across the state.

In an endeavor that closely resembled a military deployment, the feeding unit was set up and hot meals prepared.

Three days after the disaster, the unit was feeding close to 6000 meals per day. Volunteers began breakfast preparation at 4 a.m., with the work of food preparation going constantly until early evening. While the Red Cross delivered thousands of meals into outlying areas without electricity, several hundred meals were served on site.

Even with a cold wind whipping around the food preparation area, Mississippi Baptist volunteers were not deterred from serving a hot meal in the name of Christ to those in need.

Mississippi Baptists' disaster relief efforts are funded by gifts to the annual Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering.



HOT JOB — Steam rises from cambros (serving containers) as volunteers from local Baptist churches work alongside Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Unit workers to serve hot meals in the early morning cold and fog following the tornado strike on November 10 in Columbus. (BR photo by Tony Martin)

### WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

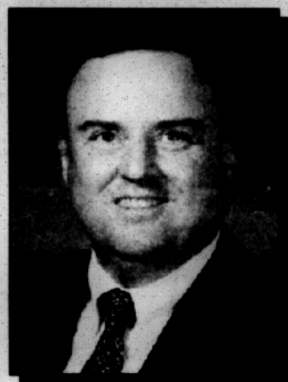
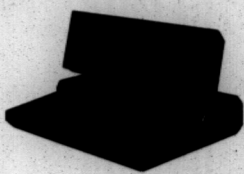
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530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Send  
news, communication, and address  
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RECORD, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS  
39205-0530 (601) 968-3800  
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E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org**

VOLUME 126 NUMBER 46  
(ISSN-0005-5778)

Published weekly except weeks of July 4  
and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist  
Convention Board, 515 Mississippi Street,  
Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$9.35 per  
year payable in advance. Economy plans  
available for cooperating Mississippi  
churches. Periodicals postage paid at  
Jackson, MS. Member, Association of State  
Baptist Papers. Deadlines: News items —  
one calendar week prior to requested pub-  
lication date. Advertising — two calendar  
weeks prior to requested publication date.

# A well-deserved label

**O**utsiders seem to delight in hang-  
ing disgraceful labels on our  
beloved state and its people. We  
learned just last week that Mississippians  
are the fattest people in the nation. Previous  
pronouncements have pegged us as  
arguably America's poorest educated, most  
illegitimate citizens with one of the highest  
venereal disease rates found anywhere.

To be fair, other studies show  
Mississippians are the country's most gen-  
erous citizens, prone to be more sensitive  
to the plight of our fellow human beings  
than many other areas of the country. The  
state also ranks high in religious  
faith and church attendance.

Like the rotting albatross around  
the neck of the old sailor in Samuel  
Taylor Coleridge's *Rime of the  
Ancient Mariner*, however, the nega-  
tive portrayals of Mississippi seem to  
outrank the positive portrayals even  
though we know the state is a won-  
derful place to live and raise a family.

We certainly don't need any more  
black eyes promulgated on our state's  
reputation by people who don't even  
live here. Why? Because we're  
experts at self-inflicted black eyes.

One of the obvious ways we  
embarrass ourselves is how we  
approach the most widespread drug  
abuse problem of all time — alcohol.

Through apathy or ignorance or some other  
equally unexplainable excuse, we consistently  
avert our attention from this menace.

Among the worst and most recent  
examples of our alcoholic disconnect with  
reality are the shattering deaths earlier this  
year of five young children at the hands of  
an alleged drunk driver on the Natchez  
Trace Parkway in Madison County, which  
completely wiped out two families.

While the alleged drunk driver recuper-  
ated from serious injuries at a Jackson  
rehabilitation facility, the Madison County

District Attorney charged  
him with four counts of  
culpable negligence, one  
count of aggravated assault  
(for the mother who sur-  
vived the wreck), and one  
count of DUI homicide.

The alleged drunk driver  
can be charged with only  
one count of DUI homicide  
no matter how many peo-  
ple were killed, because  
that's the way state law is  
written — just one of many  
ways our state's elected offi-  
cials side with Big Alcohol.

The worst travesty so far  
in this case came last week,  
when a judge released the  
suspect on a personal recog-  
nizance bond. That's  
right — the man accused of  
drunkenly slaughtering  
five young children was  
released by a judge without  
exacting a penny of bond.

We have listened to all  
the lawyerly explanations  
of how bond is not meant  
to punish but to guarantee  
court appearances, and how the suspect is  
innocent until proven guilty, and how  
everyone deserves a reasonable bond.

This we know: If the suspect had used a  
knife to kill the five children, he would still  
be behind bars. If the suspect had used a gun,  
he would still be behind bars. He would still  
be behind bars because he would have been  
adjudicated a danger to the community.

Because he allegedly used a liquor bottle  
and a car to kill the five children, that's  
apparently different. Maybe the intent was  
not the same as with a knife or a gun, but  
there are still five dead children and a sus-  
pect who poses a danger to the community  
if he drinks and drives while free on bond.



He should be in jail. Not to have him in  
jail at this moment is a mockery of the  
effort to reduce the number of alcohol  
tragedies in our state. The legal system is  
one of the main reasons Mississippi is the  
number one state in the nation in alcohol-  
related traffic deaths (source: Mothers  
Against Drunk Driving).

People in Mississippi know the price of  
a life taken in a drunk driving accident is  
worth much less than a life taken by other  
criminal acts.

We're number one in something, after  
all. Of all the humiliating labels hung on  
Mississippi's people, this is one we surely  
deserve.

## GUEST OPINION:



### *The Christian's place in politics*

*By Jimmy Porter, Executive Director  
Miss. Baptist Christian Action Commission*

**A**s a nation, we are  
battling for our spiri-  
tual and moral lives.  
By most surveys and statis-  
tics, Christians are losing bat-  
tle after battle.

The Christian community has  
been misinformed by those who  
say we must not get involved in  
the issues that dictate our moral  
climate. We have been told that  
our responsibility is to retreat.  
Due to the intimidation of our  
enemies we have been reluctant  
to take an offensive position.

The August 31 issue of *World*  
magazine reveals what happens  
when Christians refuse to get  
involved in local, state, and  
national issues — particularly the  
election of government officials.

The cover of the magazine  
reads, "When Liberals Seize a  
State." The cover of the story  
illustrates that while the average  
Californian is still pretty  
middle-of-the-road, they  
have elected representatives  
who are much more liberal.  
Writer Lynn Vincent asks,  
"Ever wonder what would  
happen if liberal Democrats  
gained control of both cham-  
bers of the legislature and the  
state's governorship at the  
same time?"

That scenario has happened  
in California, and the results  
show how much damage can be  
done. The following excerpts  
are taken from the cover story:

- Eight of nineteen pro-homosexual laws passed in California in 2001, bringing to 22 the total number of such laws passed in the state over the past four years.

- A bill to make abortion training mandatory for medical students considering an OB-GYN specialty is on the fast track while a 2002 bill, which would have required a mother considering abortion to see ultrasound pictures of her child, died a rapid death.

- Senate Bill 1301 allows people who are not licensed physicians to conduct non-surgical abortions by administering chemicals such as the abortifacient RU-486. The bill also forbids the state of California to ban abortion should the U.S. Supreme Court overturn *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 case that legalized abortion nationwide through all nine months of pregnancy.

- Kindergarten through 12th grade students must be taught to "appreciate" various sexual orientations.

- Public school teachers and counselors must identify children with the potential to be "intolerant" of homosexuality, and refer them for retraining.

- All taxpayers must fund marriage-equivalent benefits for homosexual partners of state employees.

- Non-profit groups like the Boy Scouts of America that refuse to hire homosexuals may be fined up to \$150,000 per incident.

- A person's gender is what-ever he/she says it is, regardless of biology.

Republican California state Senator Ray Haynes believes the liberal onslaught in his state is not all due to the efforts of the extreme left. "Right now the conservative movement in California, particularly among Christians, is

in disarray," he said in the magazine article.

We must not allow anyone to tell us that we cannot be involved in the political arena. We must educate our people as to what is appropriate under the law and then go do it. Every candidate for public office should have to answer the tough questions relative to the issues that are destroying us spiritually and morally.

Also, it is appropriate to encourage Christian men and women to seek election to public offices where their influence can make a difference. It is clear that if God embraces government as a help to order our lives (Romans 13:1), He no doubt envisions Christians involved in that government.

Consider the profound effect upon a state when liberals run rampant, as in California, and then pray that God would motivate us all to become more involved in the political arena. We must not retreat; we must mount an aggressive offense.

May we all work to elect men and women who will honor Christ with their lives and with their decisions.

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# Vietnam begins crackdown on evangelicals

HO CHI MINH CITY (BP) — Information has been pouring out of Vietnam about a recent wave of government repression against Montagnard evangelicals in Vietnam's Central Highlands, according to Compass Direct news service in a November 13 report.

Documents acquired in October by religious and human rights workers in this Southeast Asian country and correspondence received in recent days confirm that by the end of September, 354 of 412 churches had been forcibly disbanded in Dak Lak province alone.

By mid-October, about 50 Christian pastors and elders in the province had been arrested or had "disappeared." It is expected that the remaining 58 churches in the province will soon be closed.

Montagnard churches — "Montagnard" means "mountain people" and is a collective name for Vietnam's many minority tribal groups inhabiting the Central Highlands — were historically part of the Evangelical Church of Vietnam (South). Last year, 26 years after the country was reunified under communism, the ECVN(S) was granted legal recognition. However, only a handful of the many hundreds of Montagnard churches were allowed to identify with the ECVN(S).

On Nov. 7, meanwhile, Freedom House released news of ongoing persecution of Hmong Christians in Vietnam's north-

west provinces, including the story and photo of a 36-year-old Hmong Christian man who died from beatings by police and offi-

from any further religious activity outside their own homes with their own families, the Compass Direct account continued. All communal activities of the churches — worship, teaching, prayer for the sick, observing holy days, administering sacraments, performing baptisms, weddings and funerals — were forbidden. Leaders were forced to sign statements of compliance.

Government authorities had reluctantly tolerated the existence of Montagnard churches for nearly 20 years, although there were frequent problems and many restrictions.

In February 2001, however, several thousand Montagnards surprised local authorities by demonstrating against the illegal loss of their lands to ethnic Vietnamese settlers and against the lack of religious freedom.

Waves of heavy-handed crackdowns followed, along with brutal campaigns to force Christians to sign documents agreeing to give up their faith, Compass Direct reported. Many fled into the forest or to Cambodia.

However, this latest move against churches in Dak Lak is the most severe persecution since 1975, when churches were closed and church leaders put in re-education camps for years, the news service noted.

The ECVN(S), which has usually been very cautious about speaking out against abuses, went public this time. The ECVN(S) president, Duong Thanh, has written a frank and detailed letter to Vietnam's prime minister and to other relevant government agencies. According to Compass Direct, the letter describes the persecution and points out how government actions are contrary to the constitution and to specific promises made by Vietnam's Religious Affairs Bureau.

The constitutional provision for religious freedom and the

promises of the bureau are quoted in the letter, along with a warning that it will be impossible to contain this news in Vietnam.

The letter concludes by asking the prime minister and relevant government bodies for immediate redress.

Earlier complaints addressed to local authorities by the legally recognized provincial committee of the ECVN(S) resulted in increased pressure and persecution, Compass Direct reported.

Authorities seized church leaders at will and took them to unknown destinations. They confiscated church furniture, Christian books, Bibles and musical instruments, and then sealed off or took over the simple chapels where Christians met.



**WORSHIPING IN VAIN** — More than half of Vietnam's 77 million people follow Buddhist traditions in the vain hope that their offerings and good works will earn them merit. Another 30% claim no religious affiliation. (BP photo)

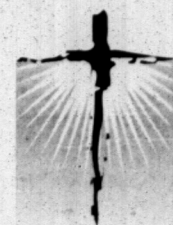
cial because he was a believer. Also, Vietnam's normally cautious Roman Catholic Conference of Bishops recently released a letter decrying the persecution of Catholic Montagnards.

Reports from the affected churches reveal a pattern, Compass Direct observed. Beginning in late summer, leaders of the predominantly Ede minority churches were summoned by local authorities, told their churches were illegal and ordered to disband their church organizations. Many were threatened with dire consequences if they did not comply.

In addition, church leaders were specifically prohibited

## Canadian Baptists on rise

COCHRANE, Alberta, Canada (BP) — The Canadian Convention of Southern Baptists (CCSB) has started a record number of new churches this year and continues to advance toward its goal of 1,000 churches across Canada by 2020. Paul Johnson, CCSB national church planting consultant, said 33 new Southern Baptist churches have been established from Prince Edward Island to British Columbia, eclipsing the previous single-year high of 23. At the same time, a recent report also indicated the CCSB ranked the highest among intermediate-size denominations for beginning new congregations in Canada from 1998 to 2000. According to a study from Church Planting Canada, an arm of the British Columbia-based evangelical church planting and research organization of Outreach Canada, the number of CCSB churches grew at an annual rate of 10.4% from 1998 to 2000. From 1992 to 1997, the CCSB grew from 100 to 124 congregations, an average yearly increase of 4.4%. The province of Alberta is being used as a test area for establishing a number of regions where church planting consultants, pastors and other church members help oversee new churches. The predominantly French-speaking province of Quebec, meanwhile, is being targeted as the location of the CCSB's first center for training leaders to develop new congregations. A similar training center could be started soon in Oakville, Ontario, a Toronto suburb and home of The Sanctuary, a new Southern Baptist church begun two years ago that has already started four other churches. Other priorities for the coming year will be to continue work in starting new churches on university campuses and encouraging new urban churches in apartment buildings.



MISSISSIPPI  
**BAPTISTS**

**THE  
SECOND  
FRONT PAGE**

*Record* THE BAPTIST

PUBLISHED SINCE 1877

NOVEMBER 21, 2002

VOL. 126

No. 46

Officials have entered chapels while Christians were worshiping and harangued Christians to give up their faith.

Local Dak Lak television is reported by many to have broadcast "Ceremonies of Voluntarily Renouncing Christianity" and has shown pictures of Christians "voluntarily" giving their Bibles and songbooks to be burned.

"All the Christians I met greeted me with tears, asked me to pray with them and then hurried me on my way lest something untoward happen to me," said a recent visitor to the area.

"Even some sympathetic government officials received me with tears, recognizing the overwhelming sadness of what is happening," he said.

He added, "Many of the churches in Vietnam are praying night and day for this 'national tragedy.'"

"Please pass this sad news to churches overseas as well so that they may participate in earnest prayer, beseeching the Lord to deliver us from this distress.

"There are many other heart-rending stories which I cannot tell you now."

## Looking back

### 10 years ago

The Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Unit is activated after a midnight storm sweeps through the state, spawning tornadoes that killed 15 people and destroyed scores of homes across Mississippi.

### 20 years ago

Forty Southern Baptist leaders — representing all sectors of denominational life — meet recently to talk about the problems of the denomination. Most came away talking about the depth and seriousness of the differences.

### 50 years ago

Van Winkle Church, Jackson, reveals plans for a new sanctuary and educational unit. The Van Winkle Church in south Jackson has had to build and expand four times in the last fourteen-and-a-half years.



# Students needed for 2003 mission projects

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Have Southern Baptists finally emerged from the long, fearful shadows of Sept. 11? One answer to that question will come in the next few months, when missionaries around the world begin finding out whether Southern Baptists are willing to send our young people to help them spread the Gospel.

Southern Baptist missionaries worldwide have requested

more than 4,000 high school students to serve alongside them in 35-plus projects next year, primarily through M-Fuge International and International World Changers, the youth mission programs coordinated by LifeWay Christian Resources and the International Mission Board (IMB).

The students will go to Latin America, Europe, Russia, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

They'll serve on "the front lines of lostness, utilizing their gifts, abilities and eagerness to find and create ways to communicate the message of Jesus," says Kelly Davis, IMB consultant for youth mobilization. "Missionaries have identified strategic ways that high school students can assist them to reach the people that God has called them to."

In Ecuador, youth volunteers will distribute medical kits, hold kids' clubs, and use sports ministry to reach out to the Quechua people. In Moscow, students will hold a youth camp for Russian teenagers.

In Jordan and Lebanon, they will teach English and use creative ministries to reach specific communities with the message of Jesus. In Western Europe, they'll seek to reach some of the millions of immigrants from North Africa and the Middle East — people who have little access to the gospel in their home countries.

Youth involvement in international mission projects nearly doubled in the year before 9/11, from 2,200 teen volunteers in the year 2000 to 4,200 last year (mostly in the pre-9/11 spring and summer). After the attacks, numerous projects were cancelled for lack of participation. This year's international teen volunteers will total around 2,000, Davis projects.

None of the youth mission projects shelved in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks was can-

celled by a missionary concerned about the security or safety of young volunteers, Davis says.

"We're in perilous times," admits LifeWay's Mark Robbins, who coordinates M-Fuge International projects, "but if the Great Commission is to be fulfilled, we will have to be risk-takers. This is not the time to be worried about what 'might happen' if we go."

"We need to be more worried about what might happen if we fail to go. We have thousands of risk-takers — missionaries — around the world who have gone to serve and represent us. They are asking that we send our students. Will we heed the call?"

More than 40% of the world's population is under age 25. In some countries, particularly in the developing world, the under-25 cohort tops 60%. Who better to reach them for Christ, ask Robbins and Davis, than young people who know Him.

"The doors are open. Missionaries are asking for young people. Youth ministers are eager to go and the students that they lead will follow courageously."

"What we need now are parents, churches and pastors willing to support and encourage their involvement," Robbins said.

For information about 2003 projects with International World Changers and M-Fuge International, call 800-999-3113, ext. 1355, or visit [www.thetask.org/youth](http://www.thetask.org/youth).



LEADING THE CHILDREN — Dimona Jackson of Clifton Forge, Va., leads Kenyan children in singing the tune, Deep and Wide. Jackson said her favorite part of the 10-day International World Changers project was the time she spent with the children. "They really loved me and accepted me," she said. (BP photo by Roy M. Burroughs)

## Second-largest missionary class appointed in Texas

PLANO, Texas (BP) — God's heart breaks for multitudes all over the world who are dying without ever hearing about abundant, eternal life in Christ, International Mission Board (IMB) President Jerry Rankin told 95 new Southern Baptist missionaries during a Nov. 3 appointment service at Prestonwood Church in Plano, Texas.

The new missionaries — the second-largest group in the board's 157-year history — were appointed before a crowd of more than 4,000 people. Prestonwood's worship team, choir, and orchestra set the tone for the evening with a multimedia performance.

The desperation of people living in spiritual darkness compels God's children to obey his call to missions, several of the new missionaries said.

"As I watched a woman crawl on her bleeding knees to bow before an idol, I committed my life to bringing Christ's good news to the 24 million people of Mexico City," said Greta Nelson of DeWitt, Va.

Another new worker, whose identity cannot be revealed because of security concerns, said he surrendered to God's call when a child with muscular dystrophy crawled half a mile across rocky ground to ask him for help.

"We are confronted by the challenge of sharing the gospel with people who are demon-possessed. They worship evil spirits, suffer from evil curses and are in spiritual bondage," said Seng Herr of Kansas City, Kan., who will serve with his wife, Chua, among the Hmong, an animistic people group in Southeast Asia. "We will bring them into the Kingdom of God."

"I didn't deserve a Christian home, a loving family, a chance to know the Savior," said another missionary going to a people group that has yet to hear about God's love. "They don't deserve a life of fear, living in darkness, a hopeless future. We've been blessed with so much. What can we give? It's our turn to give our lives away."

The greatest barrier keeping the Gospel from all peoples is not false religion or oppressive government, Rankin said. The greatest hindrance to the gospel is the unwillingness of Christians to make a "whatever it takes" commitment to the One who commanded them to make disciples of all the nations.

Many people "have subconsciously drawn a bottom line beyond which they are unwilling to go," Rankin said. "That will hinder getting the gospel to all people. You can hinder the Gospel by succumbing to fear or limiting how far you are willing to go in a sacrificial lifestyle, but the consecration that influences others to the Gospel is one that is willing to endure all things."

"Go with a servant heart," Rankin told the new missionaries. "Love the people and give yourself to them no matter what the cost."

The next IMB missionary appointment service will be Jan. 24 at North Phoenix Church in Phoenix.



PURPOSE IN LIFE — "As a childhood survivor of cancer, I knew God had a purpose for me," says new Southern Baptist missionary Freddie Wagner (right). Wagner and his wife Melissa (left) will serve in Venezuela. (BP photo by Mo Sadjadpour)

## Gardner-Webb names interim president

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. (ABP) — Retired Averett University President Frank Campbell has been named interim president at Baptist-affiliated Gardner-Webb University in Boiling Springs, N.C.

Campbell retired recently after 17 years as president of Averett, a Baptist-affiliated university in Danville, Va. He takes over for Christopher White, who resigned effective Oct. 25 amid controversy over his decision two years earlier to recalculate the grade point average of a star basketball player, making the student eligible to play during that basketball season.



# Baptist disaster relief activated in five states

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — Southern Baptist Disaster Relief units in five states — Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, Ohio, and Mississippi — responded locally to severe storms and dozens of tornadoes that ripped through the eastern United States Nov. 10-11.

Mickey Caison, national coordinator for Southern Baptist Disaster Relief, noted the scope of the unusual fall tornadoes, with as many as 70 reported in seven states.

"Typically a tornado is localized. It doesn't affect a large area like a hurricane or a flood or an ice storm," Caison said. He noted that most states, with the possible exception of Tennessee, still should be able to handle the needs with their own volunteers.

Cleanup operations in Tennessee were underway in Tipton, Anderson, Morgan, Cumberland, Coffee and Bedford counties, as well as at Union University in Jackson, according to Tennessee Baptist Convention Disaster Relief director Tim Bearden.



**STORM SURVIVOR** — A Wise Man from a Nativity set kneels in the debris left behind in the wake of a tornado that struck Columbus the Sunday evening of November 10. (BP photo by Tony Martin)

A Tennessee mobile kitchen is supporting the American Red Cross in Morgan County, and another unit is being deployed to support the Salvation Army in Coffee County. Roofing crews also

are deployed in Morgan County, Bearden said, and crisis intervention teams has responded in three counties.

Alabama also deployed volunteers on a large scale. A mobile kitchen opened in Carbon Hill,

and approximately four chainsaw teams began work there on Nov. 19, Disaster Relief director Tommy Puckett reported. Another three chainsaw teams started work in Cullman on Nov. 19, and a feeding unit and four chainsaw teams are in Centre.

In Georgia, a mobile kitchen, communication unit, and two chainsaw units responded to tornado damage in Pickens County. In Ohio, a mobile kitchen and chainsaw team has been placed on alert to respond to tornadoes in the northwestern part of the state.

In Mississippi, a mobile kitchen and three chainsaw units have been activated to respond in the Columbus area (see article on page one of this issue).

Disaster relief units generally are owned and operated by state conventions and local associations and coordinated nationally by the North American Mission Board.

For regular updates on Southern Baptist Disaster Relief responses across the country, visit [www.namb.net/dr](http://www.namb.net/dr).

## THE CURSE OF COMPLAINING

Are you a complainer? Do you complain very much about very much? Do you hear people around you complaining about every conceivable thing you can think of to complain about? Now, please understand, I'm not talking about dealing with issues, facing problems, and trying to come up with solutions to difficulties. I'm talking about just constantly belly-aching about everything that comes along.

I recently heard a fellow say, "You couldn't please him with a pleasing stick!" I'm not real sure what that means, but I think it's an indication that the person complains about everything. Just pick out the subject and most of us can find something to fuss about — weather, politics, health, the economy, traffic, restaurants, gas prices, food prices, clothes prices, home prices, heating and cooling prices. **PRICES!** Then there are **TAXES** — whether income, sales, state, or federal. How about **INSURANCE**? Just take your pick where you want to begin complaining: car, house, medical, life. They all receive ample doses of our complaining.

Can you think of any area of life about which people do not complain — sports, entertainment, church, school, family, friends or fellow workers? Of course, we are not alone in our complaining. Neither are we justified because others do it. Do you recall the children of Israel crying out to God for help and intervention while they were in Egypt and God came on the scene producing incredible miracles that brought about their liberty? He set them free and sent them forth in the direction of a new land, a new day, and a new way. Yet, before they could



## Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer  
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

get out of the country, they were complaining, murmuring, and belly-aching, all because they were facing a trial. Of course, it was no small thing — a sea in front of them and an army behind them; but, oh how soon they had forgotten the great God of the 10 miracles called plagues.

God opened the sea up and escorted them across on dry ground. He covered up the pursuing army in a watery grave so that nothing could harm them. Then they thanked God, for life was good again for a little while, but it didn't take long till the people began to fuss and fume because their food was running low, so God promised them that He would supply their daily sustenance. He provided them with the wonderful bread from Heaven called manna. It would be right outside the flap of their tent morning after morning after morning. There was no need to hoard it because God would provide for the next day and the next. All that was needed was to trust Him. So, the complaining subsided — for a little while.

The people then began to complain about the manna, God's delicious bread from Heaven. They got tired of it because it was the same old, same old, so they griped. Then, God provided delicious meat to go with the manna — a quail supper. They were thrilled to get it but soon turned and com-

plained about having to eat so much of it. Can you imagine people with such a lack of an attitude of gratitude? Well, here we are, living in the most blessed country in the history of mankind, enjoying the highest standard of living and the greatest abundance of creature comforts that have ever been known, and in the midst of it all, we complain!

This is the Thanksgiving Season in America and it would do us well to have a season of repentance to cleanse our hearts of the sick and unsightly sin of complaining. Now, let's do this — let's not confess for all the other fellow's complaints. Instead, let's allow God to show us the attitude that has grown in our own hearts. It will probably take some serious thought, work, and repentance to undo and uproot some of the stuff that is deep down inside of us because we have developed such a strong response mechanism to quickly criticize, but tune in and listen carefully for the criticisms you hear in the land of blessings. Be attentive at church. You may be surprised by what you hear — complaints about the heating or cooling, grumbling about the parking, sound, seating, music, musicians, time, the behavior of some child, the way someone is dressed, why someone is absent, why someone is there, what other churches are doing,

what some are not doing, the concern that someone has over some methodology of evangelism, or the criticism because of the lack of evangelism! What will probably surprise you even more is that some of these complaints may be coming out of your own mouth!

To that great nation of people that God guided out of Egypt into the Promised Land, who had every advantage and received countless blessings yet chose to keep complaining, God said, "I will send snakes into your midst." It was a revealing time in the life of Israel because they did the same thing when the snakes came as they did when the blessings came — they complained and cried out to God! You see, whether it was manna from Heaven, or wonderful meat dishes, or snakes, their hearts still remained about the same.

The attitude of ingratitude has nothing to do with the number of the Dow Jones averages. It really has nothing to do with the temperature or the amount of water in a rain gauge, nor is it connected with the aches and pains you may feel in your body. No, the attitude of ingratitude is directly connected to your heart and the degree to which you will trust God to work in your life and give Him thanks for what He is doing.

There are pains that pull us closer to God and there are provisions that push us further from Him. There are blessings that burden us and there are burdens that bless us. So take this opportunity to pause and praise the Lord — not just for what you have or for what He has done, but for who He is and for the confidence that you can have that He will care for you.

Happy Thanksgiving to you and your loved ones.

## Ministers see growth of non-Christians

PHOENIX, Az. (ABP) — The majority of Protestant pastors believe the influence of non-Christian religions and New Age spirituality will increase in the next 10 years while the influence of Christians will decline or stay the same, according to a survey by Ellison Research of Phoenix, Az.

More than four-fifths of ministers polled (82%) said they expected the influence of non-Christian religions to increase in the United States in the next decade. A majority (55%) said they believe New Age spirituality will gain ground.

Thirty-five percent said they thought the number of Christians would increase, while another 35% thought the number would decrease. Three in 10 said it would stay the same.

More pastors expect the proportion of Americans who are believing Christians to decrease (37%) than to increase (34%). Forty-four percent expect the proportion of Americans attending church to decrease, compared to 33% who expect it to grow.

About one in four (26%) expect the influence of Christianity to increase in Americans' daily lives, while 41% said it would decrease. Forty-four percent believe overall freedom of religion in the U.S. will decrease in the coming decade. Ten percent think it will increase and 46% expect it to stay the same.

The Phoenix-based marketing research company based findings on a national survey of 567 Protestant ministers who are actively leading churches. The sampling margin of error is 4.1%.



## NAMES IN THE NEWS

### Staff Changes



**Ainsworth** has been called as Minister of Youth and Sunday School at Trace Ridge Church, Ridgeland. Richard Nettles is pastor.

Easthaven Church, Brookhaven, ordained **Scott Smith** as deacon on Oct. 20. Pictured (from left) are his wife Heather, Smith, and Bendon Ginn, pastor.

New Life Church, Leaf, ordained **Tony Sanderson** as deacon on Oct. 13. Pictured (from left) are Leroy Pugh, Sanderson, and Jerry Rawls, pastor.

Trace Ridge Church, Ridgeland, held an ordination service for **Brad Harbour, Ron King, and Sidney Malone** on Oct. 20. They

will serve alongside Larry Luke, Hugh Johnson, Tom Lariviere, and Mitch Simpson.

Parkway Church, Houston, recently ordained **Jason Brassfield** and **David Pearson** as deacons. Pictured (from left) are Pearson's wife Leigh, Pearson, Brassfield, and his wife Amanda. Gregg Thomas is pastor.

Sylvarena Church, Wesson, held a deacon ordination on Sept. 22. Pictured (from left) are **Mike Elliot**, his wife Lisa, **Dale Lowery**, his wife Scottye, **Jerry Carter**, his wife Frankie, **John Landress**, his wife Mary Lou, **Tony Waltman**, and his wife Kathleen. **Stuart Givens** is pastor.

**Brian Freeman** was ordained as deacon at First Church of Glendale, Hattiesburg, on Nov. 10 at 6 p.m. A reception honoring the Freemans was held in the Fellowship Hall following the service. Pictured (from left) are **Walter Watts**, Freeman's wife Amy, Freeman, and **Don H. Stewart**, interim pastor.



Heather & Scott Smith and Bendon Ginn



Leroy Pugh, Tony Sanderson, and Jerry Rawls



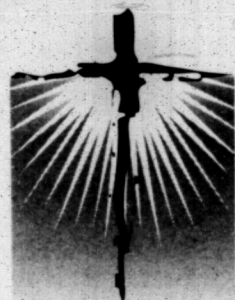
Walter Watts, Amy & Brian Freeman, and Don Stewart



Leigh & David Pearson and Jason & Amanda Brassfield



Deacon Ordination of Sylvarena Church, Wesson



# MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS

## BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

**Philip Turnquist**, professor of business at William Carey College on the Coast, received the National District Director of the Year Award from the International Fraternity of Delta Sigma Pi. Delta Sigma Pi is the nation's oldest professional business fraternity. The award was presented to Turnquist for his work as district director to the chapter at the University of West Florida where he worked before coming to WCC.

William Carey College Professor **Maria Creyts'** art exhibit, Cloth and Garments, opened Nov. 15 with a reception from 11:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. in the Lucile Parker Gallery, Thomas Hall, WCC, Hattiesburg. The exhibit will hang through Dec. 20 and can be viewed 1-4 p.m., Mon.-Fri., or by appointment. For more information, call (601) 318-6192.

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## JUST FOR THE RECORD

**Tylertown Church,** held revival services Sept. 29-Oct. 2. Kermit McGregor, Mendenhall, preached and Danny Brock, Flowood, led music. Five professions of faith were made. Michael W. Glenn is pastor.

**Immanuel Church, Hattiesburg,** is a collection center for Operation Christmas child Nov. 21-25. Shoebox gifts may be dropped off from 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Mon.-Sat., and 1-6 p.m. on Sunday. For the closest drop off point in your area call 1-800-353-5949, log on to [www.Samaritanaspurse.org](http://www.Samaritanaspurse.org), or call (601) 264-2427.

The **GAs of Gunter Road Church, Florence,** were recognized for completing the World Venture 3 Study Course. Pictured (from left) are Alana Turner, Katelyn Dukes, Victoria Burnham, and Nita Turner, leader.

**Cedar Grove Church, Columbia,** purchased a bus in April 2001. The note burning was held in October. Pictured (from left) are Phillip Duncan, pastor, James Bryant, and Elois Blansett.

The **GAs of First Church, Richland,** participated in Beat Hunger Weekend during October. They collected over 150 items and \$50. Both collec-

tions will go towards the Love in Deed food closet to help the needy community. Sandy Ashley is the GA Director.

**Barbara Joiner,** author, speaker, and missionary, will speak at Grace Church, Philadelphia, on Nov. 24 at 10 a.m. Joiner has written several books and is a writer for Dimension, Missions Mosaic, and Accent. A potluck lunch will be served following the morning service.

**First Church, Jackson,** will hold Celebration of Reflection on Dec. 17 at 6 p.m. in the chapel. The service is open to anyone who has experienced grief over the loss of a loved one. There will be a can-



GAs of Gunter Road Church, Florence.

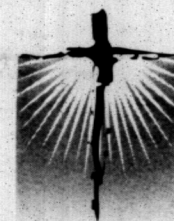
Fellowship Hall West. For more information, call (601) 949-1907.

**Fernwood Church, Gulfport,** will hold their Christmas Play on Dec. 8 at 6 p.m. and their Christmas Musical on Dec. 15 at 6 p.m. followed by a fellowship. For more information on upcoming events, contact the church at (228) 896-4556.



Blackaby

be the primary speaker at the International Missions Banquet on Friday at 5:15 p.m. in Fellowship Hall East. There will be a book signing Sunday at 5:15 p.m. in Fellowship Hall West, and Blackaby will preach at 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. To reserve tickets for the Friday evening banquet, call (601) 949-1978.



MISSISSIPPI  
**BAPTISTS**

### Revivals & Homecomings

**Rena Lara, Rena Lara:** Nov. 24; Harvest Day; worship, 11 a.m.; dinner at noon; afternoon singing, 1 p.m.; Billy J. Beckett, Columbus, speaker; Floyd M. Cooper, pastor.



Phillip Duncan, James Bryant, and Elois Blansett

dle lighting of a votive Christmas tree and presentation. Ron Mumbower will bring the message. The service is followed by a reception and fellowship in

and President of the Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary, Cochrane, Alberta, will be a special guest at First Church, Jackson, Dec. 6-8. Blackaby will



GAs of First Church, Richland

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(*I have sinned.*)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death.  
(*I repent.*)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you.  
(*I believe in Jesus.*)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him.  
(*I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.*)

*But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).*

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.





## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

### WRITTEN BY MAN

Editor:

In response to the article on page 10 of the October 24 issue regarding missionaries affirming the Baptist Faith and Message (BFM), I have preached a long time and the Word of God is true. I never have found in the Word of God where we have to follow the teachings of man.

It looks like Jerry Rankin, president of the International Mission Board (IMB), and Avery Willis, IMB senior vice-president for overseas operations, want to be the Popes of the Baptist Church. The BFM was written by man. I have preached in churches where they would not teach it. I want you to read Rev. 22:18-19 and see where you stand.

Bill Clark  
Ackerman

### SUPPORT WORLDCRAFTS

Editor:

You and I are blessed to participate in the mission of God here on earth. In this role, we frequently have opportunities to thank the many volunteers who work with us. It can be difficult to identify an appropriate way to thank them and still support missions and ministry. I am writing to mention an idea that may help in that regard.

You may already be aware of WorldCrafts, a non-profit ministry of Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) begin in 1996. The purpose of WorldCrafts is to purchase and import products handcrafted by men and women living in poverty around the world, thus helping to provide for themselves and their families.

WorldCrafts also assists missionaries who are working with these people. As a result, people learn about Christ and receive critical income at the same time.

There are actually several situations where missionaries could not be in a particular part of the world if not for the business platform provided by WorldCrafts. As sales increase, the local craftsmen can hire more and more people. In many

cases, the local people are being brought out of poverty and to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ through this ministry.

As you plan ways to thank your volunteers, I hope you will consider using gifts from WorldCrafts. In doing so, you will be honoring the ones who help make your ministry and mission efforts a success, and supporting a vital ministry at the same time.

David George, president  
WMU Foundation  
Birmingham, AL

Editor's note: For more information on WorldCrafts or for a product list, visit [www.wmu.org](http://www.wmu.org) and click on WorldCrafts in the left column. WMU Customer Service can also be contacted toll-free at (800) 968-7301.

### SAVE LANDMARK

Editor:

On October 21, the senior adults from Diamondhead Church, Diamondhead, went to Palestine Gardens northwest of Lucedale. Palestine Gardens was built in 1960 and includes to-scale models, vertically and horizontally, of the entire Holy Land area including Bethelhem, Jerusalem, Capernaum, rivers, seas, etc. Palestine Gardens could (and should) be a national landmark for all Christian and non-Christians.

It appears that when Palestine Gardens was built in 1960, there may have been a trust or some other funding arrangement to maintain it. Now there is only one man, Don, who appears to be a guide, caretaker, maintenance man, and jack of all trades.

Palestine Gardens is in a terrible state of disrepair. The little buildings, the countryside, the rivers, etc., are all heavily covered with algae, fungus, leaves,

and trash. The Jordan River is difficult to see because the riverbed is almost obliterated.

I'm writing this letter in a scattergun approach, hoping that it'll reach the right people so that Palestine Gardens might be restored. It would make a great church youth group project. I don't think the restoration would require very much money at all. Some tan paint for the buildings and lots of elbow grease should do it.

With publicity, new directional signs, and local education, Palestine Gardens could become self-sustaining and a blessing to all the U.S. I sure hope Mississippi Baptists will take the lead in making it happen. I would encourage all Mississippi Baptist leaders to visit Palestine Gardens and see first-hand the amazing potential.

Vernon C. Parker  
Diamondhead

### HOLLOW SOUND

Editor:

"We are special." These words (Editor's Notebook, October 24) have a hollow sound to me. Once again I am amused that Mississippi Baptists think so highly of themselves. Yes, we can tout our record contributions and the number of short term missions taken. I say "we" because I am one, but I would be very hesitant to say that "the finest Baptists in the world" are in Mississippi.

Let's take a look around Mississippi and see what is going on. No, that can't be gambling in the "buckle of the Bible Belt." I don't believe that the "great men and women" that have gone before us would be at all pleased that Mississippi Baptists have voted in such carnality for the sake of the state treasury. How long will it be before we Baptists

will be number one in the nation in gambling revenue? What a claim to fame.

I could continue to list other firsts for our state of which the world will take note, such as children in single parent homes, illiteracy, children born out of wedlock, poverty, and lawsuit judgements, and there are probably others.

Until Mississippi Baptists clean up their on backyard, so to speak, I doubt that the world will take seriously our claim that "we are special."

Paul Smith  
Summit

### GOOD MEMORIES

Editor:

As I read your Editor's Notebook in the October 24 issue, it brought back memories of the years I spent in Mississippi as a college student, staff member, and pastor in three Baptist churches in different areas of the state.

While in Hattiesburg as a college student, I met the woman who is still my wife after 34 years. There are Mississippi pastors whom I cherish as lifelong friends.

Your comments about the Bible Belt and Mississippi Baptists also reminded me of many friends I made during those years; of mission trips taken to New Mexico, Texas and Minnesota with some of those friends; some of the spiritual experiences which challenged me; and the Christian brothers and sisters who walked with me through dark valleys and celebrated with me the joys of a life lived in the presence of the Spirit.

It also reminded me of a parable that Jesus told in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 18, verses 9-14.

Raymond L. Spears, pastor  
First Church, Herndon, Va.

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**BI-VOCATIONAL YOUTH MINISTER** sought by church averaging 185 in Sunday School. Mail resume to Corinth Baptist Church, 207 Church Road, Magee, MS 39111 by December 9, 2002.

**BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC** position available at Bethel Baptist Church in Water Valley, Miss. For further information contact Bill

Finch at (662) 473-3667 or email [bfinch@softhome.net](mailto:bfinch@softhome.net).

**SEEKING TO FILL NEW POSITION:** Children's Director, Immanuel Baptist Church, 6949 Hwy 61 South, Vicksburg, MS 39180, contact person: Donnie Tedford at (601) 636-0482.

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**LAKE HARBOR BAPTIST CHURCH**, twenty miles north of Jackson seeks a Bi-vocational Minister of Music. Detailed responsibilities upon request. Send resumes or letters of interest to Lake Harbor Baptist Church, 3973 Hwy 43 North, Brandon, MS 39047.



# Federal court: monument 'impermissible'

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (BP) — Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore has 30 days to remove a 5,300-pound granite monument of the Ten Commandments from the rotunda of the state judicial building, after a federal judge ruled the monument violates the constitution's ban on government promotion of religion.

In a ruling handed down Nov. 18, U.S. District Judge Myron Thompson said he does not believe all Ten Commandments displays in government buildings are illegal, but that the monument in the judicial building crosses the line "between the permissible and the impermissible."

The monument features the King James Bible version of the Ten Commandments sitting on top of a granite block. Around the monument are quotes from historical figures and documents, such as the Declaration of Independence, but critics contend the commandments dominate.

Moore installed the monument after the building closed on the night of July 31, 2001, without telling any other justices, but he did tell Florida television evangelist D.

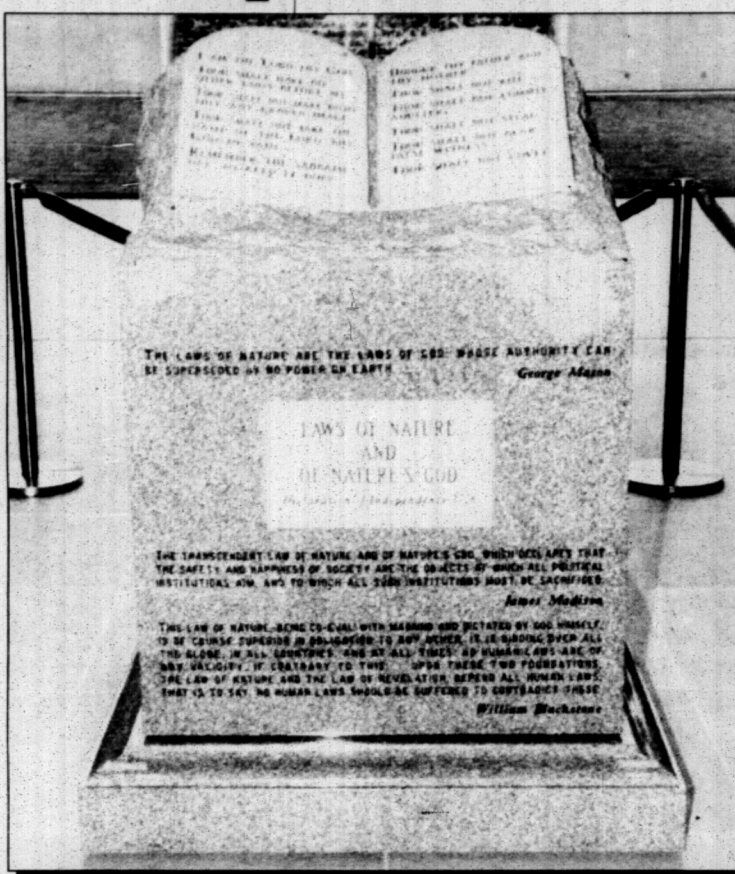
James Kennedy, who had a crew from his Coral Ridge Ministries film the installation and offered videotapes of it for a donation of \$19. Moore has appeared numerous times on Kennedy's nationally syndicated religious television show.

Moore testified during the trial that the commandments are the moral foundation of American law. He said the monument acknowledges God, but does not force anyone to follow his religious beliefs.

Moore is a Baptist layman who came into the national spotlight for fighting to display the Ten Commandments in a county courthouse. He was elected Alabama chief justice in 2000.

Thompson, in his 96-page ruling, agreed with Moore's contention that the Ten Commandments are an important source of American law, but he disagreed with the way the chief justice went about recognizing that source.

Moore's attorneys have said in the past that they would appeal such a ruling.



# President disowning comments critical of Islam

WASHINGTON (BP and local reports) — President Bush has attempted to distance himself from some prominent Christians' descriptions of Islam as a violent and evil religion.

Some statements about Islam "do not reflect the sentiments of my government or the sentiments of most Americans," Bush told reporters at the White House Nov. 13.

"Islam, as practiced by the vast majority of people, is a peaceful religion, a religion that respects others. Ours is a country based upon tolerance .. and we welcome people of all faiths in America. And we're not going to let the war on terror or terrorists cause us to change our values," he said.

Speaking prior to a meeting with United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, Bush also said the "war against terror is a war against individuals whose hearts are full of hate. We do not fight a religion."

Among conservative Christian leaders who have criticized Islam's teachings or practices since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks by Muslim terrorists are:

- Pat Robertson.
- Jerry Falwell.
- Jerry Vines.
- Franklin Graham.

Bush's remarks came two days after the latest public criticism of Islam was expressed in televised comments by Robertson.

On the Nov. 11 edition of The 700 Club, Robertson said what Islamic writings and teachings say about Jews, "is worse than the Nazis. Adolf Hitler was bad, but what the Muslims want to do to the Jews is worse."

"Those people want to destroy Jews. The Koran teach-

es that the end of the world will not come until every Jew is killed by the Muslims.

"Somehow I wish the Jews in America would wake up, open their eyes, and read what is being said about them."



Bush

In his defense Nov. 14 on The 700 Club, Robertson said his comments were based on Islamic texts and teachings.

His initial comments followed a news report that Muslims are teaching children in the Middle East that Jews are descended from apes and pigs, a cohort said.

"[W]e must distinguish between the origin of the religion and the adherents to it in the United States, who indeed are peaceful people," Robertson said Nov. 14.

"So to say 'the religion is

peaceful' I don't think is accurate. To say that most of the adherents in America to the Islamic faith are peaceful is absolutely correct," he pointed out.

Robertson called the president's disagreement with his comments "minor" and said it would not end his support for Bush.

The president has frequently described Islam as a peaceful religion since the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

This time, Bush went a step further and made clear he rejected the comments by some of his prominent supporters among religious conservatives.

Some administration officials and foreign friends "believe that not specifically rejecting these remarks is tantamount to accepting them, and the president wanted to address this head-on," a senior White House aide said, according to a CNN report on its website.

Secretary of State Colin Powell also repudiated such comments about Islam.

"We will reject the kind of comments you have seen recently, where people in this country say that Muslims are responsible for the killing of all Jews, and who put out hatred," Powell said Nov. 14, according to CNSNews.com.

"This kind of hatred must be rejected. This kind of language must be spoken out against. We cannot allow this image to go forth of America, because it is an inaccurate image of America. We are a welcoming nation," he said.

Earlier this fall, Falwell said in a televised interview he believed the Muslim prophet Muhammad was a "terrorist."

He later apologized, but Muslims overseas rioted, reportedly as a result of the remark, and Falwell's life was threatened by an Iranian cleric, according to CNSNews.com.

Falwell, the founder of the now-defunct Moral Majority organization, is pastor of Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Va.

While retaining ties to non-Southern Baptist groups, the church in recent years has affiliated with the SBC through the breakaway conservative Baptist convention in Virginia.

In June of this year, former Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President Jerry Vines distinguished Allah from the biblical God in a sermon to pastors prior to the SBC annual meeting in St. Louis.

"Jehovah is not going to turn you into a terrorist that'll try to bomb people and take the lives of thousands and thousands of people," Vines said. He also described Muhammad as a "demon-possessed pedophile."

When a storm of protest followed Vines' remarks, defenders of the pastor of First Church in Jacksonville, Fla., said he was citing Islamic writings.

One Muslim volume says Muhammad took a girl of six years of age as a wife and consummated the marriage physically when she was nine.

Franklin Graham, president of the charity/evangelical group Samaritan's Purse and son of evangelist Billy Graham, has also endured criticism for describing what he sees as the violent nature of Islam.

## ABC develops homosexual detective series

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — ABC is developing a murder-mystery detective series featuring homosexual partners in the lead roles, a series considered to be a version of the 1980s hit show, Hart to Hart.

Mr. and Mr. Nash, starring actor-director-screenwriter Alan Cumming in one of the title roles, will feature a homosexual couple living in San Francisco who operate an interior design business and stumble upon a new mystery each week, according to planetout.com, a website for homosexuals.

CNN.com and Entertainment Weekly also reported that the new series is being developed by actor Steve Martin's production company, along with Carsey-Werner-Mandabach, the production team behind The Cosby Show; Rosanne; Dynasty; the short-lived God, the Devil, and Bob; and most recently, That '70s Show.

"I am proud to be a part of 'Mr. and Mr. Nash,' especially the part where it's a big hit," said Martin, who was recently tapped to host the 2003 Academy Awards on ABC.

Producers will soon launch a casting call to find a partner for Cumming's character. With the pilot set for shooting in the spring, the show may air in the fall of 2003.

"This is a murder mystery show, and these guys are going to be smart and will hopefully be doing some stereotype-busting," Scott Seomin, entertainment media director for the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, said in the planetout.com report. "Stereotypes are based in truth and humor. We as a community can laugh at ourselves and others better than any other minority."

Calls by Baptist Press to several Disney offices found a stated lack of familiarity with news reports about the show.



## FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

### Salvation Begins a Life of Obedience

Romans 6:12 - 23

By Gene Neal

Isn't it amazing how things can look differently as a result of the slightest change in conditions? Things change with a little more light or a little less, a different angle, or even a different attitude. Someone once said that the issue of obedience is simply changing one letter of one word: from "I've got to" to "I get to." In the book of Romans Paul teaches some very clear theology of salvation, justification, and sanctification. He argues that salvation is not a result of our own effort but a beautiful gift from God passed on to us through the doorway of faith placed on His merit and His work. He also teaches that the one-time act of

justification (this takes place at the moment of salvation) carries with it certain blessings such as peace, hope, love, security, power, and direct access to God. These blessings equip us and enable us for a life of obedience and growth (the fancy word for this is sanctification). Whereas justification is instantaneous, sanctification is a lifelong process of living, learning, and obeying. At this point the skeptic would say, "Ah, I knew there was a catch! I knew I had to keep the rules to get to heaven and for God to love me." WRONG! God's love for us never changes. He knew about all of our sin when Jesus died for us. His love for us will never diminish no matter what we do.



Neal

If we trust Christ and place our faith in Him, we will go to heaven - again, no matter what we do. So what is so important about obedience?

First, Paul addresses the "license to sin" argument at the beginning of chapter six of Romans. Some would say that if we can't lose our salvation

then we are free to do anything we want. Let's change the angle on the way we look at that statement. Paul says since we are saved we are free to live productive lives rather than sinful lives. Grace and eternal security in no way give us a license to sin. The person who uses this argument proves that they have not experienced the grace of God. Grace sets a person free! Prior to salvation, every person is a slave to sin no matter how good they may be. Sin is the master of the non-Christian's life. By faith in Jesus, God's grace sets us free of that slavery. Unfortunately, many Christians don't live out that free-

dom. There are accounts of former slaves returning to slavery following the Civil War. There are stories of Japanese soldiers hiding in island caves long after World War II ended. In the same way, there is the reality of Christians living under the control of sin even after being freed. We have been called to freedom - the ability to do and think what is right. Thanks to this freedom, we get to obey.

Paul goes on to discuss the principle of obedience in verses fifteen and sixteen. He echoes what Jesus taught about the impossibility of serving two masters. We are either a slave to sin or to obedience by grace. Again, this shows how ridiculous the argument is that we can choose to sin because of grace. Not only is it theologically wrong but humanly illogical. Notice that in verse seventeen Paul says that this change of loyalty, this freedom, comes from the inside. How many times has a person tried to

change the outside and even succeeded to a certain degree? With behavioral modification, any of us can change the outside, but unless the heart changes, there is no freedom. Paul admits that this is a difficult discussion and can only be understood when we look at it through the position of God's grace.

Paul finished his discussion in chapter six by talking about the benefits of obedience. He used terms which were easy to understand: life and death. Who would not choose life over death? Thanks to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we can choose eternal life by placing our faith in Him. Thanks to the power of His Holy Spirit, we can choose abundant life in the here and now by living out the freedom that is ours as children of God. This is obedience - not that we've got to, but we get to by His grace!

Neal is the pastor of First Church, Quitman.

## EXPLORE THE BIBLE

### Serve God

John 12

By Ginger M. Caughman

**Setting:** A Party in Bethany. Six days before the Jewish Passover, Jesus came to Bethany for a dinner. His friends Martha, Mary, and their brother Lazarus (whom Jesus had recently raised from the dead) were honoring Jesus. They prepared a meal, then each honored Jesus in their own way. Lazarus was the host and sat at the table with Jesus while Martha served the meal. Mary presented an unusual gift to Jesus and received His approval. At least some of the disciples were present. Jesus predicted His death: "You will not always have Me." Read the details in verses 1-11. Bethany was about 2 miles from Jerusalem (John 11:18).

The next day as Jesus entered Jerusalem, He was wel-

comed by the crowds who placed palm branches at His feet, praised Him and shouted "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"

The first two scenes of this chapter begin with celebrations. Though the surface theme is one of celebration, in the deeper meaning of this lesson, Jesus teaches the disciples the meaning of His death. Be sure and read the background Scripture in verses 12-22 and Jesus' call for faith in vv. 37-50. Jesus' invitation is personal: He calls you and me to become His follower and daily join Him in serving God. Jesus served sacrificially. How do you serve Him?

1. Know the Requirements. Vv. 16-22; 23-26. Jesus explained discipleship in terms of serving and following



Caughman

Him. The writer John wrote this last Gospel after the synoptic Gospels were written. Verse 16 is one of the places to verify this fact. Verses 20 through 22 illustrate the comment of the Pharisees in verse 19 that "the whole world has gone after Him." Serving Jesus involves following Him and being willing to go wherever He goes.

John 12:26 is a key verse in the chapter. Write the verse and read the words over and over until they permeate your spirit. Following Jesus is foundational to the Christian faith. Sometimes there are No Pat Answers, as the late Eugenia Price wrote in a favorite quote. "The only direct statement of Jesus which is simple enough for me to comprehend when my heart is breaking or when I'm discouraged or scared is: 'Follow me.' I cannot understand life... But I can grasp 'Follow me.' Jesus will answer by giving you Himself."

2. Understand the Example.

Vv. 27-33. Jesus explained that His service to God involved dying for the sin of the world. Jesus was willing to die for my sins and for yours. Whether or not we are called to physically die for others we are called to die daily to self and serve Jesus sacrificially. Paul wrote, "I have been crucified with Christ...the life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God." (See all of Galatians 2:20). What challenges for American Christians! Die to self. Serve others (See Galatians 6:14). "...The world has been crucified to me." Jesus' death on the cross was for all (vv. 32-33).

3. Accept the Invitation. Vv. 34-36. On the basis of His teaching about His expectations for His followers, Jesus invited those in the crowd to put their faith in Him. Just as today, some accepted and some rejected the Christ. To accept the invitation of Jesus to follow includes joining Him in serving God sacrificially. How will you serve Him today?

Looking ahead to next quarter's study, these words which Jesus spoke to His disciples

will encourage us: "Then Jesus told him, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed' (John 20:29).

Past: Have you believed? Present: Do you believe? Future: Will you keep walking with God and growing in Him?

Together we have studied God's word this quarter. Would you please pray with me.

**PRAYER:** Dear Heavenly Father, we praise and thank You that You are the Lord God; that You have drawn us to Yourself; and that You have poured Your blessings into our lives. Thank you for loving us first, for enabling us to be your children, and helping us walk in Your marvelous light! We want to worship You and share with others the good news of Your great salvation as we continue to grow in service to you. Thank you God, for real life in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. In whose name we pray. Amen.

Caughman is a member of First Church, Magee.

## Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted.

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Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the **who, what, when, where** details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts

are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be

published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.



# THE VILLAGE VIEW



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## Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of **The Village View** is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

October 1-31, 2002

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# Paris evangelism opens eyes of students

**SPREADING THE WORD**  
— Students from the University of Georgia on a mission trip to France help missionaries distribute invitations to Paris-area churches. (BP photo by Sandy King)



PARIS (BP) — When 19 students from the University of Georgia (UGA) spent a week in Paris — the "City of Love" — they prayed around the Arc de Triomphe, traveled to the top of the Eiffel Tower, sang in subway lobbies and shopped on the Champs-Elysees. What excited them most were the opportunities they had to meet the students of Paris.

Paris is home to a half-million university students, 100,000 of whom are internationals. Reaching these students is the challenge embraced by Southern Baptist missionaries Scott and Mentanna Campbell.

The Campbells rely heavily on student volunteers because, as Scott put it, "There is a barrier there. They don't ask us to lunch or give us e-mail addresses. The only way we're going to meet French students is through other university students."

Scott likes to call France the "forgotten frontier." A cradle of Western civilization sprinkled with cathedrals, Christians assume its residents have heard and rejected the Gospel. Scott

said they haven't shunned it. The fact is, they've never heard it.

Jenny Key, a UGA junior, and Greg Tanner, a sophomore, talked one afternoon with Tarik, a student from Morocco, and Omar from Algeria (not their real names). A survey created by the

Campbells helped them start a conversation about spiritual matters.

The survey starts with questions like: "What is the greatest threat to the world today?" and progresses to ask about real peace, truth, and Jesus Christ.

Tarik said he doesn't trust anything he can't see and touch. When Omar looks at the world he knows there must be a God.

Through similar conversations, God opened the American students' hearts to understand the needs of Paris' young people. "They call Paris the city of love," said Michele Dalton, a senior theatre major, "but it's an empty love."

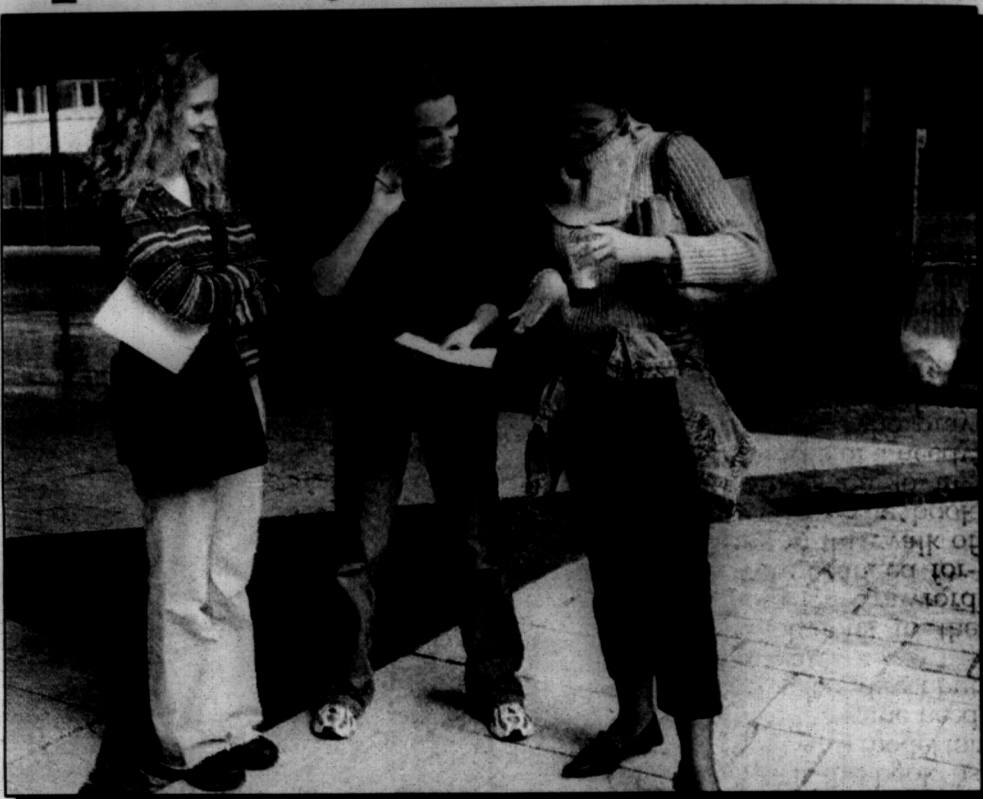
One survey question asked, "Is there a God?" A student replied, "Maybe." The next question asked, "What is truth?" The student replied, "There is no truth."

What about peace? "You can never obtain peace because there's always going to be someone there to mess it up," said another student.

Hassan (not his real name) a history major from Morocco, was firm in his answers. "I don't believe in God, and I don't pray," he said. "People in France are less religious than in the U.S.A."

When the Georgia volunteer team went to the campuses, they didn't find students ready to accept the Gospel but as they talked to and prayed for Paris' university students, they found a surprise: curiosity.

"We were built up with these assumptions that the French people weren't very open, and



**CURIOUS IN PARIS** — University of Georgia students Faith Califf (left) and Amelia Brown (center) learn many Parisians have never heard the Gospel, much less rejected it, and in many instances are curious about it. (BP photo by Sandy King)

I've been totally convicted," Dalton said. "They're curious. God has shown me that through his will the people will be open."

One student said she needs someone to help her understand the Bible. "She didn't care about God; she cared about herself and politics and she wants someone to interpret the Bible," Dalton said.

Sophomore Allison Carter and Jamie McClendon, who graduated last May, talked with two French women. The women equated religion to war, alluding to the Crusades and conflicts in the Middle East.

"Religion is contrary to what it's teaching. If I talk about faith, it's something true and peaceful and real," said one woman.

However, it's this peace and truth that they don't know how to find. When Carter and McClendon asked them about real love and peace, one woman said: "These are difficult questions. I'll have to think about it the whole day."

The Georgia students realized a one-time week in Paris was not enough to make an impact, so they've decided to partner with the Campbells.

During the next four years, UGA's Baptist Student Union — through a Georgia partnership with France — hopes to send short-term volunteers during Christmas, spring break and summer break. They also plan to send a semester missionary to work with the Campbells.

## Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx  
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UQDQF DBQFQYAFQ  
EMJ XQUD PZ UFPJAZ:  
HRD UFMOQF EMJ  
KMLQ EPDBARD  
GQMJPZW  
AY DBQ GBRFG  
RZDA WAL YAF BPK.  
MDGJ DEQINQ: YPNQ

Clue: Q=E

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Romans Four: Twenty.

## Profs write about prayerwalking 'journey of faith'

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — Prayer is a powerful weapon that can destroy the enemy's strongholds, but it helps to pray within the walls of the enemy camp, according to Dan Crawford and Calvin Miller.

Crawford and Miller have published a new book on prayerwalking, or interceding on location in cooperation with the Holy Spirit and fellow believers for the growth of God's Kingdom. In *Prayer Walking: A Journey of Faith*, Crawford and Miller reflect on their participation in an "around-the-world" prayer journey in September 1997.

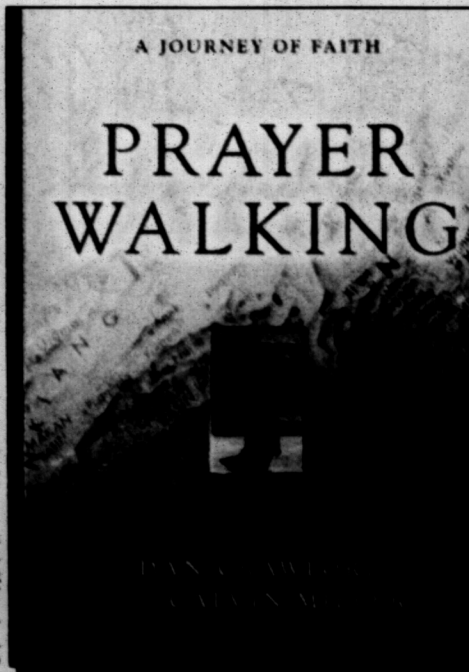
Crawford, professor of evangelism and spiritual formation at Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, and Miller, a former Southwestern faculty member and current professor of preaching at Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in Birmingham, were two mem-

bers of a prayer team that prayerwalked through gateway cities in China, India, and the Middle East.

Robert Garrett, professor of missions at Southwestern, and Randy Sprinkle, director of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board's international prayer strategy office, also accompanied the authors and kept journals of their experiences.

Crawford said the book describes a missions and evangelism strategy that was not popular 10 years ago but is growing in effectiveness.

"This is a how-to book on intercessory prayer using the popular method of prayerwalking with numerous illustrations including the journal of a three-week prayerwalk through China, India, and the Islamic world. The strategies and models contained in this book have already been translated into



many languages and used by missionaries and national leaders throughout the world."

Many of the events described in the book were

reported in editions of *The Commission* magazine in 1998.

Miller said that the book "is intended to lay down a model for others who have the same need to minister in this less direct but highly effective way."

"It will be obvious to the reader that both Dr. Crawford and myself were changed forever by sharing in this walk of faith," Miller said. "The book principally focuses on loving Christ in the middle of a needy world so that those who pray while they walk and those among whom they walk can never be the same again."

Crawford plans another prayerwalking journey in central Europe during a sabbatical leave from Southwestern. He will reside in Prague, Czech Republic, and prayerwalk through cities in 10 nations.

*Prayer Walking: A Journey of Faith*, published by AMG Publishers, is available in bookstores and at [Christianbook.com](http://Christianbook.com).